



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1635 | FAX (517) 373.3300

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/

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Contact: Jeff Cobb
517-373-1635

Sen. Van Woerkom's environmental legislation signed by governor

LANSING – Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom's effort to stop the spread of invasive foreign species became state law this week when the governor signed his legislation.

"Our local natural ecosystems are being threatened by foreign plants and insects that destroy native vegetation," said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores. "We can already see how our woodlands and waterways are being choked with aggressive nonnative plants. It's time to stop their spread and protect our natural resources."

Public Act 78 of 2005, sponsored by Van Woerkom, prohibits a person from knowingly possessing a prohibited or restricted species, except for identification, or lawful eradication or research purposes. The bill also requires a person to notify the proper authorities if a prohibited species was found to be in a location where it had not previously been known to be present.

Van Woerkom's legislation was part of a package of bills that aimed to protect Michigan's environment from invasive plants and insects such as the Eurasian milfoil, hydrilla and Emerald Ash Borer that destroy natural Michigan species. This legislation is similar to prohibitions put in place last year to protect Michigan's waterways from invasion by nonnative fish species.

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